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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 003842

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [EG](#) [IS](#) [ICRC](#)

SUBJECT: CHARGE PRESSES MDA ISSUE WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY  
CABINET CHIEF OF STAFF

REF: A. BUCHE-HEGADORN MAY 18 E-MAIL

- [1](#)B. CAIRO 3752
- [1](#)C. STATE 89991 (NOTAL)
- [1](#)D. CAIRO 2515 (NOTAL)
- [1](#)E. CAIRO 2481
- [1](#)F. CAIRO 1798 (NOTAL)

Classified by Charge Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) During a May 19 meeting with Chief of Cabinet Sameh Shukry (the second-ranking official at the MFA), the Charge urged Egypt to play a constructive role on the issue of the Third Protocol and Magen David Adom (MDA) membership in the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. Noting earlier demarches to the GOE, the Charge emphasized the importance we attached to this issue and our interest in resolving this long-standing humanitarian issue. Responding to the Charge's reference to reports that Egypt's current Ambassador in Geneva was playing an obstructionist role on the MDA issue there, Shukry stated that the current political "atmosphere" with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict had not yet changed sufficiently to permit forward motion on Swiss efforts to convene a diplomatic conference. Furthermore, on the technical side, the Israeli MDA had not yet resolved technical requirements for joining the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, he asserted. While agreeing with the Charge's characterization of the topic as a humanitarian issue, not a political one, Shukry asserted that the MDA issue had "unfortunately become politicized."

[1](#)2. (C) Shukry, who is slated to become Egypt's next Ambassador in Geneva, believed that progress on Gaza withdrawal and positive Israeli steps to ease tensions and restrictions on Palestinians would help to "improve the atmosphere." Nevertheless, the USG's "sense of urgency" and the high level of attention the issue was receiving were surprising to Egypt. The GOE, he said, shared the strongly held views of other members of the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) that the "timing was off" for moving forward. Still, from what Shukry knew, the lack of a resolution to the Third Protocol/MDA issue had not prevented cooperation on the ground between the Israeli MDA and the Palestinian Red Crescent. Therefore, he argued, there was no "humanitarian side-effect." The Charge responded that it was the firmly held USG position that there should be no political linkage preventing resolution of this issue. In closing, Shukry said that the issue was under review within the GOE and suggested that the completion by Israel of the remaining technical criteria ("five out of a total of ten") which would qualify the MDA for membership in the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement would help the process.

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GRAY